DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 021 526 JC 680 264

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FRESHMAN ORIENTATION EVALUATION, SHORELINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

Shoreline Community Coll., Seattle, Wash.
Pub Date 66
Note- 6p.
EDRS Price MF- $0.25 HC- $0.32
Descriptors- ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, ATTENDANCE PATTERNS, CAREER PLANNING, *COLLEGE FRESHMEN, COLLEGE STUDENTS, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, *COUNSELING SERVICES, GUIDANCE PROGRAMS, *JUNIOR COLLEGES, LIBRARY FACILITIES, *ORIENTATION, QUESTIONNAIRES, STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS, *STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES
Identifiers- *Brown Holtzman Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes

Evaluation of the freshman orientation program at Shoreline Community College (Washington) was approached through the use of several criteria (1) results of the Brown-Holtzman Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA), (2) comparison of first-quarter grade averages with orientation program attendance records, (3) the completion of a forced-choice evaluation questionnaire, and (4) solicitation of unstructured written comments by students attending the last session. Initially, the orientation program was structured for eight groups of students meeting in six voluntary sessions with emphasis being placed on increased intellectual demands of college, use of library facilities, knowledge of one's interests and aptitudes, value of career planning, and specific offerings at shoreline. Attendance records were kept for five of the groups so that the relationship between the number of sessions attended, cumulative high school grade point averages, and first quarter college grades could be explored. For four or more of the six sessions, 43% of the freshmen attended the sessions. Four of the recommendations made as a result of the study were (1) to decrease the number of sessions to three, (2) to discontinue administering the SSHA, (3) to place greater stress on specific Shoreline program offerings, both in the transfer and vocational-technical programs, and (4) to add emphasis to career planning. (DG)

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SHORELINE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FALL QUARTER 1966

FRESHMAN ORIENTATION EVALUATION

Counseling Center — Gordon Hartley

Six voluntary orientation sessions were presented to incoming freshmen by the counseling staff. Particular emphasis was placed on the following areas:

1. The increased intellectual demands of college requirements
2. Use of library facilities
3. The importance of knowing one's interests and aptitudes
4. The value of career planning
5. Specific program offerings at Shoreline Community College

During the initial session, the Brown-Holtzman Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA) was administered to all attending students. This represented an attempt to furnish each individual with an objective inventory of his study habits and attitudes. It was also anticipated that this would provide one measure of comparison between Shoreline students and other college populations and would determine the relationship between SSHA scores and academic success for this particular group. The results were also expected to serve as a basis for discussion in subsequent individual counseling interviews.

The problem of evaluating this orientation program was approached through the use of several criteria. These included: the SSHA results, a comparison of first quarter grade averages with attendance records, the completion of a forced-choice evaluation questionnaire, and the solicitation of unstructured written comments by students attending the last session.

RESULTS

Complete attendance records for five of the eight groups were kept so that any possible relationship between the number of sessions attended, cumulative high school grade point averages, and first quarter college grades could be explored. Table 1 contains these attendance figures. Although information was not available on all eight groups, there is no reason to assume any significant variation in the remaining three groups. The attendance of some students may have been affected by a change from their original class schedule, which prevented them from meeting their assigned orientation time. Another source of confusion resulted from not having a regularly assigned, centrally located meeting room which the lecture hall now provides. Despite this, the data indicates that, even though the sessions were voluntary, forty-three percent were in attendance at four or more of the six scheduled classes.

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TABLE I

ATTENDANCE RECORD

(N = 411)

Sessions Attended	Number Attending	Percent Attending	Cumulative Percent
0	36	9	100
1	56	14	91
2	65	16	77
3	74	18	61
4	70	17	43
5	67	16	26
6	43	10	10

Information contained in Table 2 shows that those students who entered college with higher grades were most apt to attend orientation sessions. Those who did come more often also experienced a smaller average drop in first quarter grades when compared to their previous high school averages. It could be postulated that their attendance in regular classes was also on a more consistent basis. The number of students is less than shown in Table 1, since it included only those students who completed the quarter and for whom adequate high school information is available.

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF ATTENDANCE AND G. P. A.

(N = 378)

Sessions Attended	Number Attending	High School Cum. GPA	Fall Quarter GPA	Difference
0	30	2.16	1.77	-.39
1	42	2.11	1.64	-.47
2	58	2.15	1.84	-.31
3	70	2.25	1.81	-.44
4	71	2.42	2.18	-.24
5	64	2.31	2.15	-.16
6	43	2.39	2.19	-.20

Table 3 compares the SSHA results obtained at Shoreline with norms presented in the manual for freshmen at ten four-year colleges and universities. The mean and standard deviation of scores earned by women students did not differ significantly from those of the other institutions. Male students, however, had average scores significantly lower than those who comprised the original norm group. Similarly, the standard deviation of men's scores was significantly more restricted than their respective norm group. If the basic premise of this scoring system is accurate, i. e. that better students tend to score higher than weak students, it would appear that the male students entering this college form a more homogeneous, less academically able group than the beginning freshmen in four-year colleges. This would be expected on the basis of differing admissions policies. It is surprising that the scores of women did not show similar relationships.

TABLE 3

A COMPARISON OF SSHA RESULTS WITH COLLEGE NORMS

	Number		Mean			Standard Deviation		
Group	SCC	National	SCC	National	t	SCC	National	F
Men	375	2114	31. 45	35. 3	5. 73**	11. 84	13. 0	1. 20*
Women	192	1446	31. 40	31. 6	0. 45	9. 33	10. 1	1. 17

* sig. at . 02 level
** sig. at . 01 level

A comparison of men's and women's scores of Shoreline only can also be made from the information in Table 3. There was no difference in their average scores, but the variability of men's scores was significantly greater at the . 02 level of confidence (F= 1. 61). This difference in standard deviations follows the trend of four-year college students.

Table 4 contains means and standard deviations for cumulative high school grades (H. S. G. P. A.), first quarter college grades (C. G. P. A.) and SSHA scores for both male and female students. The mean and standard deviation for SSHA scores differ slightly from those shown in Table 3 since only those students who completed the first quarter were included in these computations. These statistics support the observation that entering women students as a group are more academically able than their male counterparts.

TABLE 4

Means and standard deviations for SSHA scores, high school G. P. A. and first quarter G. P. A.

Group	Number	Mean HSGPA	SD	Mean CGPA	SD	Mean SSHA	SD
Men	343	2. 17	0. 42	1. 96	0. 74	31. 75	11. 81
Women	183	2. 45	0. 47	2. 12	0. 80	31. 65	9. 31

A comparison of zero order and multiple correlation coefficients between SSHA scores, H.S.G.P.A. and C.G.P.A. is contained in Table 5. The SSHA Manual reports correlations with grade point averages for men ranging from .27 to .66 with an average of .45. For women the reported correlations vary from .26 to .65 with an average of .45. The correlations obtained here at Shoreline question whether the SSHA scores can make a unique contribution to the prediction of academic success. Not only were the zero order correlations between SSHA scores and college grade point disappointingly low, the addition of these scores to high school grade point averages failed to produce multiple correlations significantly greater than those obtained with high school grades alone. Individually, however, the various items on the SSHA did provide usable information in actual counseling situations.

TABLE 5

Comparison of zero order and multiple correlation coefficients between SSHA scores, high school G.P.A. and fall quarter G.P.A.

Variable	Men		Women	
	SSHA	CGPA	SSHA	CGPA
HSGPA	0.17	0.40	0.23	0.59
SSHA		0.19		0.21
HSGPA + SSHA		0.42		0.59

N's shown in Table 4.

During the fi session students were asked to complete an orientation evaluation form to obtain some relatively objective information. These forms were completed by 35 percent of the students who attended the first session. Most items related either directly to the students' impression of the orientation program or to their future goals. The results were tallied and are presented in narrative rather than tabular form.

Eighty-one percent plan, at least initially, an eventual transfer to some four-year institution. Fifty-nine percent indicated plans to attend Shoreline Community College during the 1967-68 school year, while 30 percent were undecided.

Approximately one-half of these students claimed to work at least ten hours a week. Twenty-nine percent stated they were employed approximately 20 hours per week.

Over 80 percent felt participation in a student activity program is helpful, but only 51 percent indicated that they had been even occasionally involved in their high school activity programs.

About three-fourths of those responding felt the orientation program should remain on a voluntary basis. Somewhat over one-half indicated that the number of sessions was about right. Seventy-seven percent felt the program was of value to others in the group, while 69 percent felt it was of personal value.

Eighty-one percent stated they had not made changes in their educational goals as a result of information obtained in orientation, but 60 to 70 percent felt they were better prepared to make such decisions because of an increased awareness of what colleges have to offer.

Eighty-two percent expressed agreement with the present campus rules, but 15 percent stated they were unaware of these same regulations.

Almost 70 percent of the responding students felt their SSHA scores were accurate. Slightly over half declared them to be of personal value.

Approximately one-third felt college was more difficult than they had expected, while another one-third stated that it was easier than anticipated.

Over 70 percent felt pre-registration advisement and information was helpful. Among other areas covered, those most generally said to be valuable included career planning and specific program offerings at Shoreline. The emphasis placed on meeting intellectual demands and information covering use of the library facilities received least support. It can be speculated that most of these students had been exposed to these topics several times in the past and tended to de-emphasize their usefulness. Following first quarter grades, it would be interesting to learn their present feelings concerning these topics.

When asked where more stress should have been placed, students were consistent in selecting Shoreline Community College course offerings (particularly those in transfer programs), employment opportunities within business and industry, and vocational-technical information.

Students were also encouraged to write any comments they might have in addition to their responses to the evaluation items. It was hoped that this method might elicit information which had otherwise been overlooked; however, as might have been anticipated, the individual reactions were so varied and contradictory that little useful information could be identified.

For example, suggestions that the program be required equaled those stating that attendance should be voluntary. Some students felt the programs were too general, while others insisted that the program could not be specific. In contrast to forced-choice selections, the library presentation was mentioned a majority of the time in a positive manner. There were several suggestions that a tour of the library be included in future programs.

Requests for additional information ranged over a wide variety of topics, reflecting individual needs rather than those of the group majority. The only consistent requests were for the material to be presented in fewer sessions.

In general, though, it can be said that students who responded with additional comments felt the total program had been of some benefit to them.

Recommendations:

Several recommendations for improvement in the orientation program can be made on the basis of these results. Among these are:

1. Reduce the emphasis placed on increased intellectual demands made by college requirements.

2. Include a tour of facilities when presenting information concerning the library.

3. Decrease the number of sessions to three and, if at all possible, avoid scheduling any for late afternoon.

4. Discontinue administering the SSHA.

5. Place greater stress on specific Shoreline program offerings, both in the transfer and vocational-technical programs.

6. Continue the pre-registration orientation and tour of the campus.

7. Put additional emphasis on career planning.

8. Increase the amount and availability of occupational and vocational material to students in addition to information about various colleges.

REFERENCES

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